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ABSTRACT

An effort to reform teacher professional development is on a parallel course with the statewide academic standards and assessment system stipulated by the State of Washington's School Improvement Act (House Bill 1209). Five college/university and school district partnerships have been commissioned to develop and field test a new performance-based teacher certification program. One of the partnerships, the Shoreline School District/Seattle University Model, includes preservice coursework, an internship and a residency program integrating the support of experienced teachers, principals, district educators, university faculty and other professional educators. The teacher performance standards of effective teaching, professional development and leadership adopted by the Washington state legislature include 22 comprehensive knowledge and skills requirements. For this program, they have been translated into a standards matrix to guide the growth and assessment of new teachers. Teacher performances are identified in relation to each of the 22 requirements followed by criteria reflecting the developmental levels of building knowledge, exploring and making a plan, implementing a plan, and refining performance. (LH)

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Teacher Education for Essential Learning: A School/University Residency Program for New Teacher Development

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In a completely rational society,
the best of us would aspire to be teachers
and the rest of us would have to settle for something less,
because passing civilization along from
one generation to the next
ought to be the highest honor
and the highest responsibility
anyone could have."

-Lee Iacccco-

Introduction

In the fall of 1996, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future released the report, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future.* The report clearly articulates the high honor and high responsibility associated with teaching. It issues a clarion call for a national crusade matched by an economic investment that demonstrates a rational society's commitment to children and youth. The emphasis is on professional teaching standards and the recruitment, preparation and development of teachers. This article describes a response to that call currently underway in the state of Washington where reform efforts include a fundamental redesign in how new teachers will enter the profession in the 21st century.

Washington State Reform

Washington's School Improvement Act (House Bill 1209) was passed in 1993 to create a process and timeline for establishing statewide academic standards for students, the Essential Learnings, and an assessment system that can demonstrate a positive impact on student learning. The Commission on Student Learning defines positive impact on student learning as "a teacher, through instruction and assessment, has been able to document students' increased knowledge and/or demonstration of a skill or skills related to the state's goals and/or essential academic learning requirements."

On a parallel course with establishing statewide academic standards and an assessment system is an effort to align the

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professional development of teachers with the reform movement. Five college/university and district partnerships have been commissioned to develop and field test a new performance-based teacher certification program. This program includes a five year residency during which new teachers will demonstrate performance standards in effective teaching, professional development, and leadership.

The Shoreline School District/Seattle University Model

One of the field tests is being developed by Shoreline School District and Seattle University. This school/university partnership is committed to the hard work of collaboration undergirded by the belief that quality teacher preparation and professional development require the careful integration of theory and practice. Our partnership has focused on designing a seamless teacher education model that includes preservice coursework, internship and a residency program integrating the support of experienced teachers, principals, district educators, university faculty, and other professional educators. The residency portion of this preparation is clearly the most complex undertaking in part because the model we design must be applicable for all new teachers in the state. The support and assessment structures we incorporate must ensure quality, feasibility, and economic viability.

A 3 Phase Residency Program for Support and Assessment

The residency program being field tested by Shoreline school district and Seattle University offers a 3 phase support and assessment process. The first phase of new teacher assistance begins when the new teacher is hired and includes the first half of the first year of teaching. Support partners at the same grade level or subject area are assigned and assistance is targeted toward relational and planning support. The second phase begins in the middle of the first year and extends throughout the second year of teaching. The focus is on reflective dialogue and improving instruction. The third phase begins with the formation of a professional growth plan at the end of the second year of teaching and extends until the requirements of the plan have been met and the professional certificate has been received. State requirements indicate that this certificate must be completed by the end of the fifth year of teaching unless an extension of 2 years is granted.

Support Providers

Supporting the professional development of new teachers is vital at each phase of the residency model. Although several educators may contribute to that support at each phase, we have designated primary responsibility to specific roles throughout the program.

Phase 1. School Site Support Partner

The goal in phase 1 is to provide relational and planning support within the classroom. As soon as a new teacher is hired, a support partner at the same grade level and/or subject area of instruction is assigned by the principal.

Phase 2. School Site Support Teams

The goal in phase 2 is to promote reflective dialogue and improve instruction specifically in the area of the Essential Learnings and student assessment. The principal and all new teachers and support partners at the school site participate in the support teams.

Phase 3. District/University Professional Growth Advisors (PGAs)

Washington state guidelines for the field test indicate that each new teacher will have at least 3 educators who will support and assess performance and provide guidance during the 5 year residency program. Representation on each new teacher's advisory team must include an assigned district educator, a university professor, and an educator that the new teacher selects. In order to ensure quality, feasibility and economic viability in this process, our model suggests that the new teacher select a teacher who serves on the Phase 2 support team and the district professional growth advisor be someone whose professional role already includes new teacher assistance. District size, funding structure, and philosophy will influence whether this role is filled by staff development personnel, principals, new teacher mentors, or experienced teachers. Likewise, universities may fulfill the professional growth advising responsibility in various ways. In our model, each professor who teaches a residency course serves as a professional growth advisor for the portion of a new teacher's professional growth plan that relates specifically to the course being taught.

The Residency Handbook

During Phase 1 of the residency, new teachers and support providers will be given a handbook that clarifies the research identified needs of new teachers, the responsibilities of new teachers,

D. Murphy, ASCD, 1997, p3

principals, and support providers, guidelines for providing support, and suggested readings.

The Professional Certificate Portfolio Orientation Guide

During Phase 2 of the residency, new teachers are provided with a professional certificate portfolio orientation guide. This guide explains the 3 phases of the residency program, identifies the Essential Learnings, and clarifies the kind of portfolio entries that the new teacher should begin to gather. Entries include examples of instructional planning such as unit and lesson plans addressing the Essential Learnings, and plans related to classroom management, cultural and academic diversity, integrating technology, etc. In addition, entries on assessment and student work are gathered to document the teacher's ability to have a positive impact on student learning. The portfolio is developed in consultation with the school site support teams. During the first cycle of Phase 3, the portfolio entries are assessed in relation to Washington standards and growth goals are targeted.

The Standards Matrix

The teacher performance standards of effective teaching, professional development and leadership adopted by the Washington state legislature include 22 comprehensive knowledge and skill requirements. These requirements have been translated into a standards matrix that can guide both the growth and assessment of new teachers. The matrix reflects a developmental growth process rather than an evaluation structure. Optimal and limited teacher performances are identified in relation to each of the 22 requirements followed by criteria reflecting the developmental levels of building knowledge, exploring and making a plan, implementing the plan, and refining performance.

For example the requirement of "content expertise" falls under the state standard, effective teaching. The optimal teacher performance level for this requirement states that the teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the Essential Learnings and the continuous curriculum necessary to teach them. Limited performance occurs when textbooks direct what and how information is given and students are primarily recipients of information. Building knowledge reflects the level of performance when the teacher knows the essential competencies of the instructional content areas as well as the scope required to fit them into the continuous progress curriculum. The teacher knows that students have mastered content when they can apply it in a context

outside the classroom. Making a plan is the level in which the teacher explores multiple resources students can use to gain proficiency, outlines all the competencies required at the grade level, is aware of the grade level learning that comes before and after, and integrates the competencies and resources into lesson planning. At the level Implementing the plan, the teacher gathers evidence of students' progress in the content areas and sees where the plans need to be adjusted to ensure students acquire the necessary learning. Refining performance indicates the teacher is able to continually adjust instruction to the progress of students. A wide repertoire of resources is used to teach the content and the teacher incorporates an evaluation of the continuous curriculum to ensure needed learning takes place.1

The Performance Assessment Seminar

The first university credit course in the residency program is the Performance Assessment Seminar which is taken after the new teacher completes his or her second year of teaching. At this seminar new teachers are introduced to the Standards Matrix and guided in its use as an assessment instrument to analyze their portfolio entries that have been gathered over the first two years of teaching. New teachers self-assess their levels of performance in relation to the 22 requirements within the 3 standards of effective teaching, professional development, and leadership. Professional Growth Goals are targeted based on the reflective dialogue that occurred during Phase 2 and the new teacher's self-assessment. In addition, the university component of the growth plan is designed at the seminar. Each plan includes a minimum of 20 university credits that specifically address the new teacher's goals. Residency course options include Effective Instructional Strategies, Advanced Classroom Management, Diversity Seminars in Multiculturalism and/or Special Education, Assessment of Student Learning, Educational Leadership Seminars in selected topics, and content area courses or independent studies. All new teachers take the Performance Assessment Seminar at the beginning and the Professional Certification Seminar at the end of the university component of the program. Any change in the new teacher's growth plan related to university coursework needs to be approved by a residency program advisor at the university.

The Professional Growth Plan

The Professional Growth Plan includes: 1) the matrix and growth goals that the new teacher identifies; 2) the university

component of the program designed in consultation with the professor who teaches the performance assessment seminar; and 3) the district component designed in consultation with the district professional growth advisor. The district component incorporates related staff development based on a credit formula equivalent to 25 university coursework credits. This component is individualized to include options like in-class observations and coaching for improved instruction, school or district level committees, seminars or leadership roles, professional organization conferences and/or responsibilities, and other inservice programs identified as relating to the new teacher's goals. An annual review of growth goals and options for addressing those goals is provided by the district professional growth advisor so that the growth plan reflects the individual needs of the new teacher and the related professional opportunities that are available.

The Professional Certificate Portfolio

The new teacher's Professional Certificate Portfolio is the link that connects the university component and the district component of the professional growth plan. This documentation of growth includes evidence of teacher and student performance. Only entries from each component that directly apply to the standards matrix and the new teacher's growth goals are included in the Portfolio. University and district professional growth advisors guide and review the selected entries that pertain to their specific components rather than reviewing the whole portfolio.

It should be noted that this model of residency includes the Portfolio as a structure to guide a developmental professional growth process rather than an evaluation process. Evaluation remains the responsibility of the building principal and is conducted at the end of the 2nd. year of teaching.

The Professional Certificate Seminar

This seminar serves as a capstone university course in which the learning that has occurred over the five years is synthesized and the professional certificate portfolio is reviewed. Only those teachers who have met the credit requirements of the university and district components of the residency program are eligible to enroll in this capstone course. Residency teachers who successfully complete this course are granted the professional certificate in teaching.

Conclusion

The residency program that is described in this article is a work in progress. In curriculum language, the scope and sequence are in place but the unit and lesson plans are still being created. University and district collaboration remains vital in clarifying each organization's components so that an integrated program can exist. Issues of quality, feasibility, and economic viability are central to our discussion. We have begun to realize that the challenges associated with this approach to teacher certification are great, but we are motivated by the belief that what matters most for America's future is the high honor and the high responsibility of teaching.

1. Marilyn L. Simpson Washington Standards Matrix, draft version February 19, 1997. Developed in collaboration with Seattle University and Shoreline School District Consortium.